




## DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH POLICY/PROCEDURE

SUBJECT <b>SERVICE ANIMALS IN THE WORKPLACE</b>	POLICY NO. <b>108.02</b>	EFFECTIVE DATE <b>10/25/2011</b>	PAGE <b>1 of 5</b>
APPROVED BY:  Director	SUPERSEDES <b>308.02 10/25/2011</b>	ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE <b>08/01/2006</b>	DISTRIBUTION LEVEL(S) <b>1</b>

### PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish Los Angeles County-Department of Mental Health (LAC-DMH) guidelines under which service animals are permitted in the workplace.
- 1.2 To provide guidelines which prohibit all non-service animals from being in LAC-DMH workplaces.
- 1.3 To establish behavioral standards for service animals and responsibilities for the owners/handlers regarding their service animals.
- 1.4 To set behavioral standards for employees and others who may have contact with service animals.
- 1.5 To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), that a person with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animal in the LAC-DMH workplaces.

### DEFINITION

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy the following definitions shall apply:
  - 2.1.1 **"Services Animals"** as defined by the ADA: A service animal is any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or



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sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

2.1.2 Service animals are working animals **not pets**.

2.1.3 **“Workplace”** – any building, site, or vehicle owned, leased, or operated LAC-DMH, or any site where staff are meeting or providing services to individuals.

2.1.4 **“Pet”** – domestic animal kept for pleasure or companionship. Pets are not permitted in the workplace.

2.1.5 **“Employees”** – individuals including, but not limited to; paid staff, volunteers, student interns, and contract employees.

2.1.6 **“Clients”** – individuals who are receiving services either from LAC-DMH or from contract agencies.

### **POLICY**

- 3.1 Employees, clients, and/or family members may bring service animals into the workplace when necessary.
- 3.2 In order to ensure the safety of all employees, clients, and/or visitors, only service animals are permitted in the workplace. Safety, security and orderliness require that all other animals be prohibited from LAC-DMH workplaces.
- 3.3 The service animal owner/handler is responsible for control and care of the service animal, including all needs of the animal.

### **PROCEDURE**



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- 4.1 The owner/handler must advise management immediately of the presence of a service animal in the workplace. Management can ask if the animal is a service animal and what task the animal has been trained to perform.
- 4.2 LAC-DMH employees may not ask questions about the service animal's owner's disability.
- 4.3 LAC-DMH employees may not ask for certification or a special ID card as proof of the animal's training, and the person with a disability using a service animal may not be required to use a specific entrance, exit or area within LAC-DMH's facilities.
- 4.4 The owner/handler of the service animal should be informed of LAC-DMH policy on "Service Animals in the Workplace."
- 4.5 LAC-DMH is not responsible for the care (food, water, etc.) of a service animal, or for providing a special location for the service animal to relieve itself.

### **SERVICE ANIMAL ETIQUETTE & STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**

- 5.1 When the owner/handler of a service animal is an LAC-DMH employee, he/she must provide a sign in their work area notifying co-workers, clients and visitors of the presence of the service animal.
- 5.2 LAC-DMH managers may need to provide accommodation to other workers and clients who may have animal-related allergies or fears.
- 5.3 LAC-DMH employees shall not touch/pet a service animal, or the person it assists without permission. Petting a service animal when the animal is working distracts the animal from its tasks, and touching the person without permission may provoke an unwanted reaction from the animal.
- 5.4 LAC-DMH employees shall not make noises at the service animals; it may distract the service animals from doing their job.
- 5.5 LAC-DMH employees shall not feed the service animals without permission as it may disrupt the service animal's schedule.



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- 5.6 The owner/handler of any service animal that makes unsolicited contact with anybody other than the owner/handler or shows aggression toward people or another service animal will be directed to remove the service animal from the premises.
- 5.6.1 Unprovoked aggressions will result in permanent removal from the workplace.
- 5.6.2 Provoked aggressions will be reviewed and appropriate corrective action will be taken to prevent future provocation.
- 5.7 Owners must ensure their service animal is able to lie quietly beside their owner without blocking aisles, doorways, etc.
- 5.8 LAC-DMH employees shall not separate or attempt to separate an individual from his or her service animal.
- 5.9 A service animal should stay within 24 inches of its owner/handler at all times unless the nature of a trained task requires it to be working at a greater distance.
- 5.10 The owner/handler is responsible for all service animal needs including:
- 5.10.1 Providing for all of the service animal's needs (food, water, etc.).
- 5.10.2 Providing appropriately scheduled exercise and hygiene walks outside the premises.
- 5.10.3 Removing or arranging for the removal of the service animal needs including removal of all animal waste.
- 5.11 The owner/handler with a service animal that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others will immediately be directed to remove the service animal from the workplace.
- 5.12 Employees, clients, or visitors who bring a non-service animal (pet) to a LAC-DMH workplace will be directed to remove the animal immediately to an appropriate and safe location.



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5.12.1 If the owner of the non-service animal is an LAC-DMH employee, the time required to complete the animal removal activity will be treated as unpaid leave and may be subject to disciplinary action.

5.13 Violators of the ADA can be required to pay monetary damages and penalties.

### **AUTHORITY**

Title I & II of the Americans with Disabilities Act

### **RESPONSIBLE PARTY**

LAC-DMH-Human Resources Bureau